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How to Annotate a Reading Assignment

By eHow Contributor

Reading comprehension requires you to connect with the reading assignment. Marking and annotating the text gets you to engage and interact with it in a physical way. Your pencil, pen and highlighter are terrific tools you can use to improve reading comprehension and remember the assigned text. Get the most out of a reading assignment by marking it up.

Difficulty: Moderate

Instructions

Things You'll Need

- Highlighter
- Pen or pencil

- 1 Circle unknown and unfamiliar words as you read. You may need to come back and reread the sentences before and after the word to get at the meaning of the word. Write a brief definition in the margin when you grasp it.
- 2 Underline, highlight or circle sentences that provide you with definitions of key terms. Write "Def" in the margin so you can locate the definition quickly.
- 3 Mark an X or an asterisk next to a sentence that provides an important example or a main topic.
- 4 Draw a question mark beside a point that is confusing. You may need to research this further or ask your instructor about it.
- 5 Number lists of ideas that the writer provides as support points to back up the main concept. Write a number in the margin next to each support point that clarifies the main idea.

- 6 Place a check or star next to important passages. This is a good practice when taking a test that requires you to read a passage, because the questions that follow the reading will most likely refer back to these main points.
- 7 Make notes to yourself in the margins. As you read, write any questions or comments that crop up in your mind in the margin next to the passage. Use these annotations in class discussions, essay writing or exams.
- 8 Keep it simple. Remember, you are trying to connect with the reading in some way. Mark no more than 15 percent of the text.

Tips & Warnings

- Make the reading personal. Try to find some way to connect with the material.
- Don't go overboard. Keep your annotations to a minimum.

Resources

- [Read this Article in Spanish](#)
- [Colorado State University: Annotating](#)